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Summer Food Service Program for Children

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The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Summer Food Service Program for Children helps get nutritious meals to needy preschool and school-aged children in recreation centers, summer camps, or during vacations in areas operating under a continuous school calendar. Through USDA grants-in-aid and other means, States can initiate, maintain, and expand nonprofit food service programs for children in service institutions.

WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR INSTITUTIONS?

Any nonresidential public or private nonprofit institution, or residential public or private nonprofit summer camp is eligible if it develops a summer food program, similar to the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program, for children from low-income areas. Participating institutions must serve nutritious meals to all children regardless of race, color, or national origin. All meals are served free.

WHAT FEDERAL FUNDS ARE AVAILABLE?

Federal funds are given to eligible institutions for the costs involved in obtaining, preparing, and serving food under this program (including administrative costs and rental of office space and equipment).

HOW DOES AN INSTITUTION APPLY FOR THE PROGRAM?

Institutions interested in the program may apply directly to the agency administering the program in individual States. To obtain the name of the appropriate agency in your State, write to the Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

WHAT IS THE LEGISLATIVE HISTORY OF THE PROGRAM?

The Special Food Service Program, summer and year round, was authorized in 1968 under Section 13 of the National School Lunch Act and began operating in December of that year. Recent changes which include dividing this program into two independent programs—the Summer Food Service Program for Children and the Child Care Food Program—have been authorized under the Amendments of 1975 to the National School Lunch Act and Child Nutrition Act of 1966.

This publication supersedes FNS-79, "Special Food Service Program for Children."

